

## CHEM 496: Senior Seminar in Chemistry I - Fall 2021

### Assignment 7 - Personal Statement for Graduate or Professional School or "Elevator Speech"

**Due Date: Sunday, October 24, 5:00 PM**

There are **TWO** options for Assignment #7 depending on your immediate career goals:

**Option #1** will be for many of you to write a DRAFT **Personal Statement** that will be used when you apply to graduate or professional school, or for some teaching positions.

**Option #2** is for those of you who do not need a personal statement, you will follow the outline in this document to prepare an "**Elevator Speech**". You can follow the process below for the personal statement, or you can take a look at this [elevator pitch resource](http://webhost.bridgew.edu/ebrush/CHEM%20496%20PDF/elevator_pitch.pdf) from the Career & Professional Development Center at UMASS Amherst: [http://webhost.bridgew.edu/ebrush/CHEM%20496%20PDF/elevator\\_pitch.pdf](http://webhost.bridgew.edu/ebrush/CHEM%20496%20PDF/elevator_pitch.pdf).

At some point you all will need to talk about yourselves and convince an employer, admissions committee, etc., that you are the right person for a position. In other words, you all need a "personal statement" and/or "elevator speech".

Please send your **DRAFT** to me no later than **Sunday, October 24 at 5:00 PM**. Be sure to clearly indicate if your intent is a **personal statement** or an **elevator speech**. **I am expecting from everyone 1-2 pages of text.**

The information on personal statements below is written through the lens of a person applying to graduate school, but can generally be applied for those applying to professional school, and for drafting an elevator speech.

Here are a few (redacted) examples of personal statements written by BSU chemistry majors:

[Example #1](#)

[Example #2](#)

[Example #3](#)

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The "Personal Statement" that many of you will write when applying for graduate or professional school is just ONE item used by an admissions committee to help them determine if you are qualified for their program. The Personal Statement will be taken together with your academic transcript, resume, recommendations and (possibly) testing scores (GRE, MCAT, etc.). The admissions committee will look for consistency across all criteria.

Your goal is to "tell your story" to the admissions committee based on who you are, and your professional preparation. **By putting together a good story about yourself, you show the admissions committee that you can think logically and can write well.**

In this guide, I've tried to highlight "best practices" for students in the sciences, especially chemistry. The Personal Statement is your opportunity to tell the admissions committee more about yourself, while describing what you have done to prepare for graduate or professional school. **Here are the main parts to your Personal Statement.**

- 1) **Important and relevant areas of your life.**
- 2) **Professional Statement of Purpose.**
- 3) **Did you do your homework?**

**1) Important and relevant areas of your life.** In this brief section you will introduce yourself. You may include information about important and relevant areas of your life, outside of academics. BRIEFLY explain your

extracurricular activities, like sports, student organizations, mentoring, etc? Additionally, are there any other clubs, groups or organizations in which you are an active member? Have been involved in clubs or other activities that have allowed you to develop leadership skills? In this section you can also describe relevant obstacles that you have overcome in your life, and also explain any gaps or discrepancies in your academic record.

**2) Professional Statement of Purpose.** This will be the longest section and will include information about your passions and your academic and professional interests

Describe your passion for graduate study and research or professional school. State your reasons for pursuing these studies, your professional and/or personal career goals, and what area(s) of research or specialization you wish to pursue. You want to convince the admissions committee that you a “good fit”; in other words that your academic background and research/professional interests are consistent with their program’s focus and goals.

Outline your overall professional experience, your academic and scientific background and development. Start with a brief overview of the relevant coursework you have taken to prepare for advanced studies.

Describe your professional experience, accomplishments, and skills you have accumulated: undergraduate research; relevant internship or work experience; volunteer work and/or work shadowing; special course work; workshop attendance; etc. The strongest applicants are students with professional experience that will back up your personal and career goals, and your interest in pursuing graduate or professional study. To explaining your research and/or professional experience:

- Include the name of your mentor/supervisor and the location (BSU, company, hospital, etc.)
- Present the big picture – the overall goal or vision of your group or lab
- Describe your project
  - What specific question are you trying to answer?
  - What techniques are you using?
  - Present your results, briefly
  - Indicate what your results mean and/or possible future research directions
  - Presentations (conference and/or BSU) and/or publications

**3) Did you do your homework?** This will always be the final section where you make it clear WHY you are applying to this specific program. Explain how this program will help you on your path to achieving your professional/personal career goals.

Research the faculty. List and briefly describe the work of three faculty who’s research you find interesting. This shows the committee that you have done your homework and that you have thought about what you want to do. You should be sure there are at least three faculty members whose research interests you, since admission to a doctoral program does not guarantee you admission into a particular faculty member’s group.